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OLD
HOMES of NEWBURYPORT
Massachusetts

With Introductory Text by
Richard Arnold Fisher

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Awards in the Second Annual White Pine Architectural Competition

THE Second Annual White Pine Architectural Competition was judged at The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, on May 18th and 19th, by Architects Aymar Embury, II; Wilson Eyre, Charles Barton Keen, John Russell Pope, and Alexander Trowbridge, who composed the Jury of Award. Owing to illness, Mr. Charles A. Platt was prevented from serving on the Jury, Mr. Alexander Trowbridge kindly consenting to serve as the fifth juror.

Four Prizes and eight Mention designs were selected from almost three hundred drawings submitted. The First Prize was awarded to Winchton L. Risley and James Perry Wilson, associated of New York; the Second Prize to Jerauld Dahler of New York; the Third Prize to Olaf William Shelgren of Buffalo, N. Y.; the Fourth Prize to Sotaro Y. Ohta of New York.

The Mentions were awarded to Louis J. Farmer of New York; C. M. Foster and W. M. Smith, associated of New York; Daniel Neilniger of New York; Stanley B. Parker of Boston; Richard M. Powers of Boston; Chester B. Price of New York; Satterlee & Boyd of New York; and Benj. Schreyer of New York. At the request of the Jury two designs were added to the six Mentions provided for by the Programme.

The detailed Report of the Jury will be published in the August number of the White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs, together with the Prize and Mention designs.

WE are further pleased to announce that the White Pine Specifications Book is being mailed simultaneously with this issue of the Monograph Series to the offices of all Architects now on the mailing list, excepting in such of the extreme Southern and Western States where the use of White Pine might not be commercially practical.

It is hoped that this book will be studied and used with as much thought and care as has been bestowed upon its preparation, and that, because of its absolute reliability and dependableness, it will be recognized as a valuable source of information and a real working tool to the Specification writer.



THE GOVERNOR WILLIAM DUMMER HOUSE AT BYFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.
Detail of Entrance and Front Façade.

The doorway is almost Jacobean in character, which is a type seldom found in this vicinity. The house is now used by the Head-master of Dummer Academy.

The WHITE PINE SERIES of ARCHITECTURAL MONOGRAPHS

A BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION SUGGESTING THE
ARCHITECTURAL USES OF WHITE PINE AND ITS
AVAILABILITY TODAY AS A STRUCTURAL WOOD

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No. 3

OLD HOUSES IN AND AROUND NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

By RICHARD ARNOLD FISHER

Mr. Fisher was born in the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts, and has practiced architecture in Boston for the past sixteen years, at first by himself and later as a member of the firm of Fisher, Ripley and Le Boutillier. He has made a special study of early New England buildings and has restored a number of old houses, in Boston and elsewhere in New England.—EDITOR'S NOTE.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIAN A. BUCKLY

THE city of Newburyport lies a few miles up-stream from the mouth of the river Merrimack, which forms its harbour, and was, at one period of its early and greater days, second in importance only to Boston among New England seaports. This was in the early years of the nineteenth century, when Massachusetts ships were to be seen in most of the harbours of the world; in the year 1804 it is recorded that the duties collected in Massachusetts exceeded even those of New York. This was the time when Newburyport was at the height of its prosperity, the receipts of its Custom House ranking third among Massachusetts ports of entry, and its imports in a single month reaching the value of more than three-quarters of a million dollars. In the year 1805 its fleet numbered one hundred and seventy-three ships and other vessels of good size, exclusive of smaller craft not listed. Shipbuilding was also an important industry there, and at one period one hundred vessels were under construction at the same time. A number of frigates and sloops of war were built in its yards, and later on some of the swift clipper ships, such as the renowned "Dreadnought," that made the American merchant marine famous. One generally hears that Newburyport was founded in 1635, but, strictly speaking, that is the date of settlement of the town of Newbury, from which Newburyport was set off in the middle of the eighteenth century. The two towns still form one community in a geographical and social sense. The original settlement was not on the Merrimack, but on the shores of the Parker River, a

smaller tidal stream lying a mile or two farther toward the South. The early settlers formed a farming community, but the proximity of the Merrimack led naturally to the upbuilding of sea trade, and long before the time of the Revolution it had become a shipping centre of considerable importance. Its traffic was largely with England and the continent of Europe, while that of Salem was more with the East Indies, a difference having its origin, it is said, in the limitation set on the size of Newburyport ships by the depth of water over the bar at the harbour mouth. The East India trade demanded larger ships than Newburyport could furnish, so Salem and Portsmouth were able to develop this important trade at the expense of the town on the Merrimack.

While there are interesting buildings in all parts of the town, the chief architectural interest of Newburyport lies in its High Street, which, wide and straight, and shaded by elm trees throughout its length of three miles, is one of the most charming streets to be found anywhere in New England. It lies along "The Ridge," a gentle rise of land roughly parallel to the river, and many of the old houses on its upper side stand on terraces well above the street and have deep gardens behind them running back to pasture and farm land beyond. A most interesting view of the town may be had from the rear of some of the places on the upper side of the High Street. Many of the gardens have in them little arbours or summer houses of lattice-work, that are as old as the houses themselves. Several of the more im-

portant gardens, especially those that are terraced, are of considerable interest and charm. One passing through the town is impressed by the large number of great, square three-storied houses whose dignified aspect testifies to the prosperity and good taste of their builders of a hundred years ago and more. The houses of this type were built, for the most part, between the Revolution and the War of 1812, few of them antedating the Declaration of Independence. Among the earliest and finest

Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock and other historical worthies, together with several mythological characters and a number of animals.

While houses of the square, three-storied type are undoubtedly what give its predominant character to the town, there are notable examples of the two-storied gambrel-roof type as well, of which the Bradbury-Spalding house in Green Street, built about 1790, is one of the best. Much older is the house in State Street



THE JAMES NOYES HOUSE, NEWBURY, MASSACHUSETTS.

Built in 1646. The doorways are additions made about 1830.

of the houses of this type are the Lowell-Johnson house and the Jackson-Dexter house, both in the High Street. The latter house was the residence of that eccentric merchant who called himself "Lord" Timothy Dexter, around whose name various legends have accumulated, among them the story of a shipload of warming-pans sent to the West Indies, where they were sold at great profit as ladles for use in sugar refineries. An old print shows how this house looked in Timothy Dexter's time, when it had a sort of forecourt between it and the street, around which were ranged on high pedestals a number of wooden statues representing George

now occupied by the Dalton Club. It is not known just when this was built, but its builder, Michael Dalton, bought the land in 1746, which would place the date of its erection later, at all events, than that. The boarding of the front is coursed in imitation of stone. The interior finish is very good and there is a particularly fine staircase with twisted newels and balusters. It was in this house that George Washington stayed when on his journey through the New England States. An unusual feature of this house is the great breadth of its façade, which made it possible to have five dormers in the roof without any sense of crowding.



THE JONATHAN PLUMMER HOUSE, NEWBURY OLDTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS. Built in 1760.

A still older type of two-storied house having a plain pitched roof is the Short house, No. 6 High Street, Newbury, which was built soon after 1717, when the land was acquired by Nathaniel Knight, and is given an unusual character by the large square chimney in each gable, the gable ends of the house being of brick. The front door of this house is of a kind unusual in that part of the country, with its pair of doors and the narrow light over them. These doors are undoubtedly the original ones and are of interest on that account, as few

In Newbury and Oldtown and the outlying portions of Newburyport are numerous farm-houses of the simple and dignified type found almost everywhere in New England, but the individual character of Newburyport is chiefly given by the square three-storied "Mansion Houses," of which so many are found in the High Street.

Newburyport, although to-day manufacturing has taken the place of sea-borne commerce as its chief industry, is less changed than most other old towns of its importance, and one can easily



"LORD" TIMOTHY DEXTER HOUSE, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS. Built about 1772.
Showing the house as it at present stands in the High Street after the removal of the forecourt and statues.

existing outside doors in old houses are of the period of the house itself. In many cases, not only the doors, but their architectural framework as well, have been replaced by later ones much inferior in design and detail to the rest of the building, so that one often sees on houses that obviously date from the eighteenth century, doorways of the pseudo-Greek type of 1830.

In the neighbouring town of Byfield, which was formerly Byfield parish of the town of Newbury, is the very interesting old house which is now the residence of the head-master of Dummer Academy. Its main entrance is unlike any other in the neighbourhood, its pilasters being ornamented with grape-vines carved in quite high relief, and carrying carved brackets which support the pediment.

form a good idea of how it must have looked in the year 1800 when Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, visited it while on a tour through the New England States, after which visit he wrote :

"The houses, taken collectively, make a better appearance than those of any other town in New England. Many of them are particularly handsome. Their appendages, also, are unusually neat. Indeed, an air of wealth, taste and elegance is spread over this beautiful spot with a cheerfulness and brilliancy to which I know no rival. . . . Upon the whole, few places probably in the world furnish more means of a delightful residence than Newburyport."

NOTE: Indebtedness for much information is gratefully acknowledged to "Old Newburyport Houses," by Albert Hale.



THE FOSTER HOUSE, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.

Built about 1808. Note the wide corner-boards, the interesting treatment of the deck and detail of the dormers



THE KNAPP-PERRY HOUSE, 47 HIGH STREET, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.

Built in 1809. The wooden fence corresponds in design with railing around the deck of the house.



THE BRADBURY-SPALDING HOUSE, 28 GREEN STREET, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.

Built, *circa* 1790, by Theophilus Bradbury. An especially good example of the gambrel roof, three-dormer type. The doorway has played jambs, a characteristic feature of Newburyport houses.



THE THOMAS HALE HOUSE, 348 HIGH STREET, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.

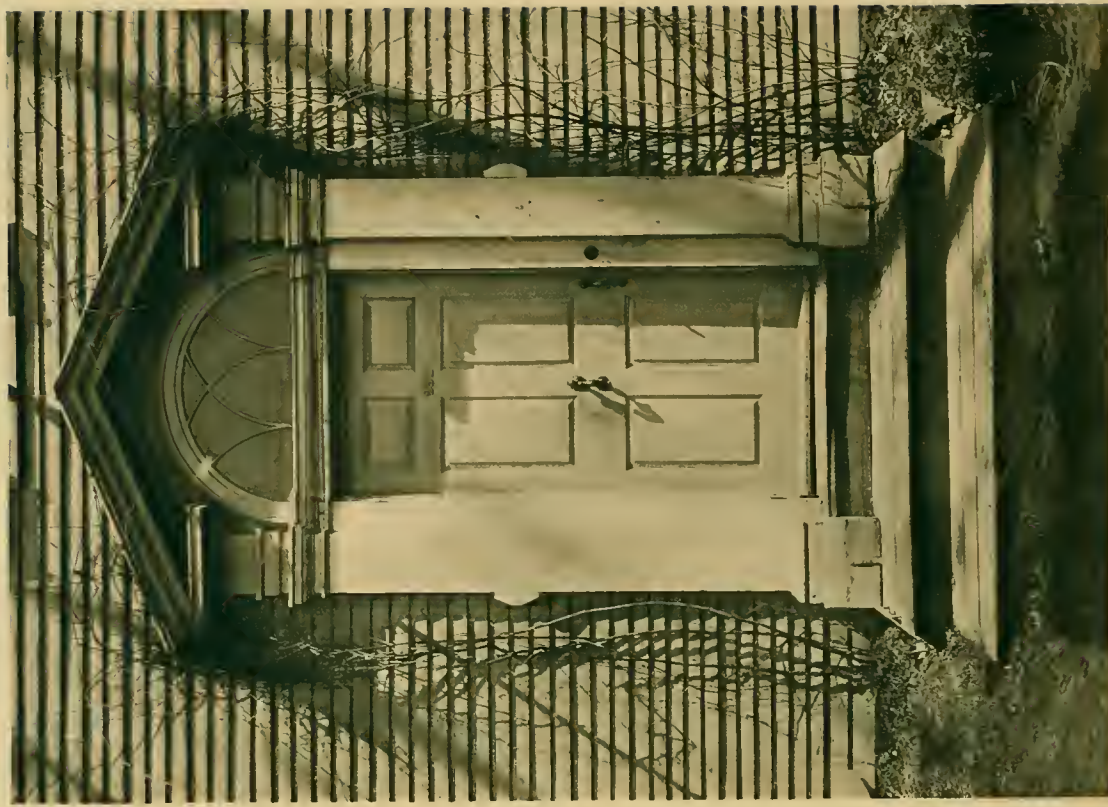
A very dignified three-story house. Both the porch and the fence are original.



Entrance Detail.

HOUSE AT 27 HIGH ST., NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.

The type of doorway originally on the gambrel-roofed house, now largely replaced by doorways of the Neo-Grec period.



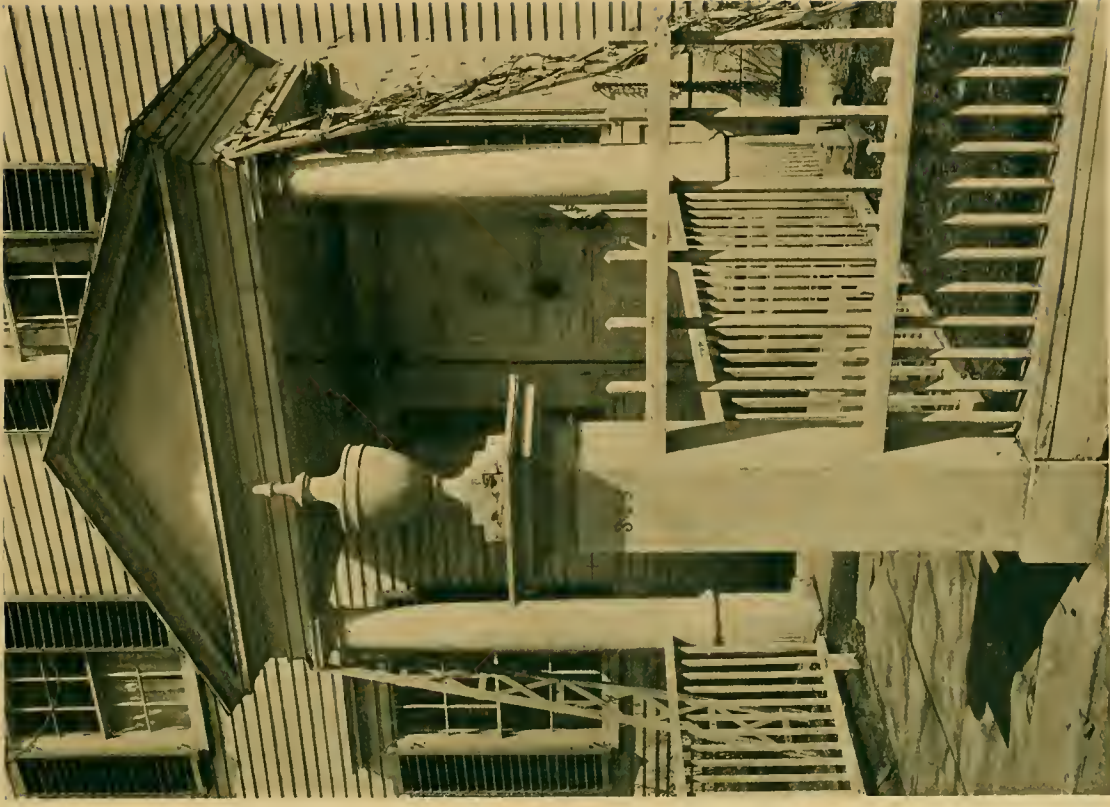
Entrance Detail.

THE EMERY HOUSE, 252 HIGH ST., NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.

Built in 1796 by Thomas Coker. The transom is brought forward and painted like the woodwork.



Porch, No. 68 High Street, Newburyport, Massachusetts
 THE STOREY-WALTERS HOUSE. 1801.
 Built by Samuel Sweet.



Porch, No. 348 High Street, Newburyport, Massachusetts.
 THE THOMAS HALE HOUSE. 1800.
 The columns rest on round reeded pedestals.



THE MOULTON HOUSE, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS. Built *circa* 1810.

A stately example of the three-story Newburyport house.
The houses along the Ridge are of similar type.



THE SAWYER-HALE HOUSE, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

Built during the latter part of the 18th century. Particularly good cornice, dormer spacing, and broken scroll pediment



THE SHORT HOUSE, NEWBURY, MASSACHUSETTS. Built in 1717.

A two-storied house of the older type with plain pitched roof and large square chimney in each gable end.



THE SHORT HOUSE, NEWBURY, MASSACHUSETTS. Built in 1717.
Detail of Doorway.

These are among the oldest panelled doors in New England.



THE NELSON-WHEELWRIGHT HOUSE, NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS.
An example of the smaller three-story house. The porch is obviously modern.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WOOD

A PROBLEM WHICH CONFRONTS THE ARCHITECT TO-DAY

LUMBER markets have, in recent years, become complex. At the time the lumber business first came into being in the White Pine forests of New England, there was little choice of woods. White Pine, almost alone, supplied the market, and being fortunately so well adapted to practically all building requirements, did its work admirably. But as the industry has reached out into the vast timbered areas of the north and south and west, new woods have found their way into the market, partly to compete with White Pine, the recognized standard structural wood, and partly to supply the greatly increasing demand for lumber products. Many of these woods formerly were considered of little value because comparatively little was known about them. They all have their uses, however; all of them possess inherent qualities which fit them for these uses; yet none of them possess exactly the same qualities or the same combination of qual-

ities. Hence the confusion which unfortunately has resulted from a lack of proper appreciation of the various qualifications of the many woods from which the user has been forced to make an unguided choice.

With so many different woods on the market, with so many exacting requirements to be met, and with so little definite information available on the specific qualities and combinations of qualities and adaptabilities of the many woods offered for sale, there is little wonder that, while lumber is being used and studied in a variety of exacting circumstances, many mistakes have been made—unintentional but costly ones which, in some measure, have reflected damagingly upon lumber in general. Lumbermen, therefore, are at last awake to these conditions, and by censoring each kind of lumber with respect to the uses for which it is offered for sale, they are endeavouring to protect the architect and his clients from embarrassing and costly

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